

SUBJECT: Support SB 184 An Act Extending Through November 8, 2022 Several Changes Regarding Election As A Result Of COVID-19 And Concerning Eligibility To Vote By Absentee Ballot and HB 5262 An Act Revising Absentee Voting Eligibility Statutes.

To whom it may concern,

I support SB 184 An Act Extending Through November 8, 2022 Several Changes Regarding Election As A Result Of COVID-19 And Concerning Eligibility To Vote By Absentee Ballot and HB 5262 An Act Revising Absentee Voting Eligibility.

Democracy is a symbol of our constitutional rights, and is a just system of government, in which power is vested in American citizens to form a government, and by being given the task to choose leaders by voting. Our constitutional rights in the United States are founded on our beliefs that all individuals have the right, regardless of their race, religion, job status, sickness, and physical inabilities to be able to vote freely, safely, and fairly, and without prejudice.

During these unprecedented times, we were faced with a pandemic on a catastrophic level. The normal lives that people lived ceased to exist. Overall, our lives, because of COVID-19, also known as the Coronavirus, gave people a live full of restrictions, shut downs, and the highly contagious respiratory disease COVID-19. Due to illness of this disease, people got too sick to care for themselves, some became caregivers to family, spouses, or friends. Military service personnel, if deployed overseas, would miss the opportunity to vote. In addition, normal routines, like going to vote in person at polling places became difficult during the pandemic, for a variety of reasons. People that are absent from their respective voting towns, or voting residence on the day of voting before an election would miss the opportunity to vote in person. Furthermore, a individuals religious beliefs, which forbid them to engage in secular activities by voting in person, would prevent a individual from voting at the polls. Overall, physical disabilities, either by contracting the Coronavirus, or other physical disabilities would prevent people from being able to vote.

By passing SB 184 and HB 5262 this would allow people to have a choice to cast their vote by absentee ballot. Voters should be able to decide if they would like to vote by absentee ballot instead of in person. Voters deserve to have the chance to cast an absentee ballot to vote, if by a number of different unforeseen circumstances are unable to vote in person. Absentee ballot voting has proven to be a safe, fair, and effective way of being able to vote by mail. In retrospect, the integrity of voting by absentee ballot, is not compromised, it's safe, and is secure.

Municipalities in each town have procedures and protocols in place to ensure the integrity and safety of absentee ballot voting. Connecticut needs to lead by example, and give the residents in our state an option or alternative to in person voting at the polls. It's time for our state to not let us be defined by the pandemic, but to utilize what we have learned by making the ability to cast our votes by absentee ballot permanent. Organizations, such as Connecticut League of Conservation Voters rely heavily on voter participation, and promote pro-environmental candidates for office. Climate change is problematic, and of great concern to the future of our planet. With our planet in distress and at risk due to the effects of climate change, and other environmental factors, more voters are moving forward with electors who will pass meaningful legislation to combat and address these environmental issues. We must be vigilant, and steadfast in our beliefs that voting reform is what Connecticut needs. It is imperative that bold and robust legislation be passed to ensure that all residents in our state be able to have a choice in voting. I urge you to please pass SB 184 An Act Extending Through November 8, 2022 Several Changes Regarding Election As A Result Of COVID-19 And Concerning Eligibility To Vote By Absentee Ballot and HB 5262 An Act Revising Absentee Voting Eligibility Statutes. I am glad I had the chance to discuss this important legislative matter. I look forward to your support. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Halle L Pierce

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